

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SOE-02 AID-05
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STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 /113 W

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O R 310512Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2841

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBESSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

RUEHBAZXAMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 4841

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EO 11652: NE

TAGS: OVIP, ENRG, AS

SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT - ENERGY R&D COOPERATION

REF: (A) STATE 079788, (B) 070307, (C) CANBERRA 2283
(NOTAL)

1. SECRETARY OF DFA PARKINSON'S QUERY (REFTEL C) REQUESTING

CLARIFICATION AS TO WHETHER PRESIDENT'S ASSURANCE OF U.S.
ASSISTANCE "IN THIS OR ANY OTHER AREA IN WHICH WE MIGHT MAKE
A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION ALSO APPLIED TO ENERGY" AND HIS
STATEMENT THAT PM IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN U.S.
ASSISTANCE IN THE ENERGY FIELD PROVIDES AMPLE EVIDENCE OF
INTEREST OF THE GOA AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN POSSIBLE COOPERA-
TIVE ACTIVITIES IN ENERGY R&D AREAS WHICH THE VICE PRESIDENT
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MIGHT DISCUSS WITH GOA REPRESENTETIVES..

2. EMBASSY NOTES WITH INTEREST THE STATUS OF THE US ER
& DA AND USDE NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTAND-
ING CONCERNING INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON COAL CONVERSION,
EXTRACTION AND PROCESSING AND THE INCORPORATION OF REVISIONS
BY THE GOA'S DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL BE

FORWARDED TO THE GOA FO
CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO THE VICE
PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL. PENDING THE RECEIPT OF THE COPY OF
MEMORANDUM, REFTEL A, EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWING COMMENTS AT THIS
TIME ON POSSIBLE COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES IN ENERGY R&D AREA.

3. TO BEGIN WITH, OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT UNTIL RECENTLY THE
ENERGY QUESTION HAS NOT ASSUMED A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF PRIORITY
IN THE GOA BUREAUCRACY. INDEED, THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES IN ITS LATE 1977
REPORT ON SOLAR ENERGY NOTES THAT IN RECENT TIMES BOTH THE
FIRST REPORT OF THE RANGER URANIUM ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY AND
THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON PETROLEUM HAVE COMMENTED ON THE LACK
OF ANY RECOGNIZABLE ENERGY POLICY IN AUSTRALIA. IT FURTHER
NOTES THAT, AS A RESULT, THE ADMINISTRATION OF EXISTING
ENERGY RESOURCES HAS SUFFERED AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATE
ENERGY SOURCES CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS A "HOTCHPOTCH".
CONSEQUENTLY, THE COMMITTEE REGARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
ENERGY POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA AS AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY AND
RECOMMENDED THAT THE GOA ESTABLISH AN AUSTRALIAN ENERGY
COMMISSION TO HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEVELOPING AND
COORDINATING A LONG TERM AUSTRALIAN ENERGY POLICY, THE

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS BODY WOULD BE WITH THE
MINISTER FOR NATIONAL RESOURCES (NOW MINISTER FOR TRADE AND
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RESOURCES).

4. RETURNING TO THE DEPARTMENT'S LIST OF SEVEN AREAS UNDER
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN WHICH EXCHANGES WOULD
BROADEN COOPERATION, EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT THE REVISIONS
SUGGESTED BY THE GOA'S DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
HAVE ALREADY ALLOWED THE RELEVANT AND INTERESTED AUTHOR-
ITIES HERE TO CULL AND/OR TO FOCUS ON THE AREAS IN WHICH THERE IS
CURRENTLY THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN AUSTRALIA AND THUS THE LIST
IS NOW KNOWN TO THE GOA.

5. WE WOULD THEREFORE ADD THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS. ON
COAL GASIFICATION, IN DECEMBER 1977 IN A REPORT ON THE
FRG-GOA PLANS FOR JOINT FEASIBILITY STUDY ON CONVERTING COAL
INTO GAS (SEE CANBERRA 8366) A DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL
RESOURCES COAL (NOW DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND RESOURCES)
OFFICIAL TOLD THE EMBASSY'S RESOURCES ATTACHE THAT THE GOA
COULD BE INTERESTED IN FUTURE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE US
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ON COAL CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY. ON
SOLAR ENERGY, THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL RESOURCES REPORT ON SOLAR ENERGY NOTES THAT EVIDENCE
AVAILABLE TO ITS SUGGESTS THAT SOLAR ENERGY WILL NOT MAKE ANY

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIA'S ENERGY NEEDS BEFORE THE END OF THE CENTURY, AND THEN GIVEN THE VERY LONG TERM NATURE OF BENEFITS THAT ARE TO ACCURE FROM SOLAR RESEARCH, AND THE EXTENT OF AUSTRALIA'S COAL AND GAS RESERVES, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS WITH RESEARCH FUNDING REQUIRED FOR OTHER ENERGY RESOURCES. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE SHORT TERM, THE COMMITTEE SUGGESTS THAT THE AREAS OF SOLAR RESEARCH WHICH HOLD MOST PROMISE FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT ARE LOW GRADE HEAT APPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES AND IN REMOTE AREAS HEATING AND COOLING OF BUILDINGS AND SMALL SCALE POWER GENERATION. IT URGES IN ALL OTHER AREAS A MAIN FOCUS ON OVERSEAS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES AND SCIENTISTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTICIPATING IN TECHNICAL EXCHANGES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

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INRE-00 /113 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2842

INFO AMEMBESSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBESSY WELLINGTON

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6. AS REGARDS THOSE OTHER AREAS IN THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RELATING PARTICULARLY TO INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES AND CRUDE OIL, THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ENERGY POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA, SUMMARIZED IN THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON ENERGY OF THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA, OCTOBER

1977 (SEE CANBERRA A-055) PROVIDE SOME CURRENT INSIGHTS ON THE THINKING AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PRIVATE SENIOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE STATE PREMIERS ON CRITICAL ASPECTS OF FUTURE ENERGY POLICY.

7. IT REMAINS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE GOA CONTINUES TO BE COOL TO THE IDEA OF JOINING THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY WILL BE GLAD TO REASSESS THE SITUATION AND OTHER SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF REFTEL A UPON RECEIPT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO (PARAGRAPH ONE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFTEL A).

8. THE EMBASSY AGREES THAT IT WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL SIGNAL OF AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN COOPERATION TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING CONCRETE IN THE NON POL/MIL FIELD DURING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT. WE THEREFORE CONCUR IN THE SUGGESTION THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT INVITE THE GOA TO SUGGEST SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLAR R&D EITHER DURING OR AFTER HIS VISIT. OF COURSE, THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF COOPERATION UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN-UNITED STATES AGREEMENT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND, PROVIDING THE NSF AGREES, THE CAIRO PROPOSAL FOR A SOLAR INFORMATION EXCHANGE COULD WELL BE SUBSUMED UNDER THE AGREEMENT. DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEGOTIATING//SIGNING THE AGREEMENT (CANBERRA 681; STATE 33584) DURING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT?
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